

# The Classical Bulletin

Published monthly except July, August, and September, by St. Louis University. Subscription price: \$1.00 a Year.  
Entered as second-class matter at St. Louis, Mo., Post-Office.

Vol. XX

MAY, 1944

No. 8

## Ovid in Medieval Legend

By EDWIN A. QUAIN, S.J.  
Fordham University

It is safe to say that no Roman poet has supplied us more fully with the materials of his biography than Ovid. For, apart from the numerous details that his understandable grief caused him to write of his life during the years of exile in Tomis, he took the trouble to provide for posterity in *Tristia*, IV, x, a formal autobiography. In detail we are told of his birth, family, education, poetical career and associates (in a "pathetic half-line" he tells us: *Vergilium vidi tantum*); his unhappy marriages, his third and faithful wife, and, inevitably, of his condemnation and exile, at the command of Augustus, to the end of the Empire.

But all of this, apparently, was not enough to satisfy the curiosity of the medieval admirers of Ovid. In the course of the centuries, there grew up around his name a series of legends that are as wonderful as anything that he described so vividly in his *Metamorphoses*. It will be immediately evident that the character of the amatory works of Ovid would hardly have recommended him to the early Christians, who were faced with the tremendous problem of building men and women imbued with the moral and religious principles of Christ's teaching, within the framework of an educational system that was almost wholly pagan. The problem is crystallized for us in the celebrated Dream of St. Jerome, in which, for his devotion to the classics, he is turned away from the throne of God, with the condemnation: *Mentiris! Ciceronianus es, non Christianus: ubi thesaurus tuus, ibi et cor tuum*.<sup>1</sup> Well known also is the regret of St. Augustine in his later years, for having wept at the sad fate of Dido.<sup>2</sup> This note of disdain for the wickedness of pagan literature and the incongruity of turning from the Gospel to Virgil, from the psalms to the odes of Horace, was a constant source of disquiet to Christian scholars for many centuries. St. Augustine finally provided them with a working principle when he showed that the treasures of pagan learning could be adapted to the glory of God after the manner of the Israelites who used the idols of the Egyptians for the vessels of the temple of God.<sup>3</sup> From that time on the *Spoliatio Aegyptiorum* became a legitimate principle in dealing with pagan literature.

The compromise thus reached was aided in the case of Ovid by the wealth of sententious, quotable lines to be found in his works, and it was not long before the poet of the *Amores* became the source of pithy, moralistic *sententiae* which Christians found quite admirable. Yet, the fact remained that the life and works of Ovid left much to be desired in one who was being made to talk like a Christian sage. The critical mind

of an Augustine could admire what was good and neglect the nature of the source, but the popular imagination of the Middle Ages needed something more than theory.

The conflict between these two attitudes toward the pagan classics, and Ovid in particular, would appear to be one source of the divergent traditions that arose around the name of Ovid. To fit the personality of the poet who was banished from Rome because of the evil influence of his works, legends grew apace which portrayed him as a sorcerer and magician. The sensual character of his amatory works, the magical transformations and incantations of the *Metamorphoses*, and the apparent approval of the deceits and seductions of the *Heroides*, all combined to give strength to the stories of magic and mystery that proceeded to develop. In his native Sulmona, the story arose that Ovid as a child had run away from home with a magician and, having been instructed in his wiles, returned home. He then constructed, overnight, a magnificent palace which became the object of wonder to the crowds. But its popularity was not pleasing to Ovid the sorcerer, and as punishment for their curiosity he transformed the men into birds and the maidens into a long line of poplars; later he descended upon them in a chariot drawn by fiery horses. Becoming enamored of the daughter of the king, who not unnaturally objected to the liaison, Ovid threatened to turn the king into a goat with seven horns. The king's soldiers, however, took him by night and exiled him to a very cold country where, among beasts, he died. Yet, he returns every Saturday night to haunt the palace that he had built.<sup>4</sup>

The assimilations and combinations of details of his life and incidents from his works are clearly to be seen in this fabrication. In a variation of the same story Ovid escapes the fury of the king by changing himself into a wolf. There is also the tale of two students who made a pious pilgrimage to the tomb of Ovid *eo quod sapiens fuerat*. One of them asked the poet which was the best line, morally, that he had ever written and was told: *Virtus est licitis abstinuisse bonis*.<sup>5</sup> The other inquired which was the worst and he was told: *Omne iuvans statuit Iuppiter esse bonum*.<sup>6</sup> Thereupon both students propose to pray for the repose of Ovid's soul, but they are harshly dismissed with the words: *Nolo Pater Noster: carpe viator iter*. An analogous version tells of two monks who paused at his tomb to say the *De Profundis*. Their good will was not appreciated and they were told by a voice from the tomb: "I don't want to be prayed for because I am damned." The reason for his damnation is found in the fact that he was seen talking to the devil in his house. Even Ovid's friendship with St. Peter Celestine, who in return for a share of the wisdom of the magician and the gift

of his house for a monastery, contracted to say Masses for his soul, was not enough to save him, and Ovid is lost forever.<sup>7</sup>

Parallel with this tradition of the wicked Ovid, however, there arose the legends of Ovid the Good, Ovid the Christian. His sentimentousness gave him the reputation of being a wise man; besides, according to the principle, *Nomen-Omen*, he had to be a wise man! Being named *Naso*, he was a man of good nose, *emunctae naris*, and hence had the power of knowing and distinguishing all things. We are told: *Naso dicitur a quantitate nasi; sicut canis dicitur sagax ab odore nasi et utilitate, sic iste dicitur naso a sagacitate nasi, id est, ingenii, quia valde sagax fuit in cognitione elementorum et proportionem rerum.*<sup>8</sup> A further detail is given us in: *Quia sicut per nasum fetida ab odoriferis discernimus, ita vitia a virtutibus disgregavit.*<sup>9</sup> Theodulf of Orleans thus characterized him: *Naso loquax, In quorum dictis quamquam sunt frivola multa, Plurima sub falso tegmine vera latent.*<sup>10</sup> These few testimonia were apparently enough on which to build the story of Ovid's conversion to Christianity by a special dispensation of divine grace, and of his opening a school at Sulmona for the teaching of Christian doctrine to children. Soon he was considered: *Vita non lubrica, ut quidam putant, sed sincera.*<sup>11</sup> The purpose of the *Heroides* was declared to be: *Castum amorem commendare, illicitum refranare et incestum condemnare. Utilitas operis est magna; nam per hoc scimus castum amorem eligere, illicitum refutare et incestum penitus extirpare.*<sup>12</sup>

From this type of thing it is not far to the complete justification of the allegorical interpretation in which all his stories are merely handles for a moral and very proper Christian teaching under the veil or *integumentum*. Orpheus and Eurydice thus become exemplars of the Gospel principle: *Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum et respiciens retro aptus est ad regnum Dei*. The application of Odysseus and the Sirens to temptation and Narcissus to self-love would be self-evident. The *Fasti* became: *Martyrologium Ovidii de Fastis*, and in the fifteenth century a pious Franciscan scribe could copy the *Remedia Amoris in vigilia conceptionis B. Mariae . . . ad laudem et gloriam Virginis Mariae*.<sup>13</sup> The story was also told that he burned some of his works not because they were lacking in literary grace but because of Christian humility and repentance. The fact that a statue of Ovid at Sulmona portrayed him in a long gown was sufficient evidence that he was a monk. Having such great knowledge, he must also have been a great preacher and, in fact, a prophet. In this same statue he is resting his foot on a book, whence it became clear that he was able to read with his feet! Nor yet, while growing in wisdom, was Ovid backward in grace. In his last years, he turned to the adoration of the true God and was said to have altered the opening lines of the *Metamorphoses* so that it began with an invocation of the Blessed Trinity. The crowning touch, however, is found in the preface to the spurious *De Vetula*, supposed to have been discovered beneath his head in his tomb at Tomis. There we read: *Ad ultimum ponit fidem suam tractans egregissime de incarnatione ihesu christi et de passione, de resurrec-*

*tione et de ascensione et de vita beate marie virginis et de assumptione eius in celum.*<sup>14</sup> Thus we see the culmination of the other tradition and, far from being consigned to hell, Ovid has become the Christian saint. At the Love Council of Remirémont, Ovid is Pope and his place is taken by a kind of *legatus a latere*, who is there to preside at the deliberations, armed with a quiverful of anathemas.<sup>15</sup>

The psychological process of absorption and concentration that is manifested in these legends is an interesting example of the working of the popular imagination. It is characteristic of the transmission of legends among the mass of men that the glittering and the marvelous are far more attractive than the cold facts of the case. The imagination feeds on the brilliant image and quite naturally leaps from picture to picture unless restrained by a sharply critical faculty. Thus the results of the elaboration of popular traditions often remind one of the creative imagination of children who can invent marvelous adventures for themselves, totally divorced from reality. When we add to this natural tendency the important influence of local pride, which frequently knows no scruple about playing with the truth, it can readily be seen that the amazing career of Ovid in the Middle Ages is quite a natural phenomenon.<sup>16</sup>

While the Ovid described in these legends never lived as an actual being, I believe we should hesitate before dismissing them as mere childish fables. In a sense, we can say that the legendary Ovid really did live and exert his force and influence. For even though imagination did give to him something more than a local habitation and a name, it remains true that this Ovid of Legend was the Ovid who was known to the Middle Ages, who was attractive to the men of those times, and who undoubtedly played his part in drawing men to read and copy and write commentaries on his works. I should venture to suggest that we might not possess the amount of the actual works of Ovid that we have today, if it had not been for the powerful attraction of the personality that was created for him in the course of the Middle Ages.

<sup>1</sup> St. Jerome, *Epp.* xxii, 30, Ad Eustochium. *CSEL* 54 (ed. I. Hilberg, Vienna, 1910) 189

<sup>2</sup> St. Augustine, *Confessiones*, I, xiii (ed. P. Knöll, Teubner, Leipzig, 1926) 15

<sup>3</sup> St. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, II, 60-61 (Maur. ed. Paris, Gaume, 1836) iii, col. 75-76

<sup>4</sup> G. Pansa, *Ovidio nel Medioevo e nella tradizione popolare* (Sulmona, Caroselli, 1924) 31

<sup>5</sup> *Heroides*, xvii, 98

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 133 reads: *Juppiter esse pium statuit quodcumque invaret.*

<sup>7</sup> Pansa, *op. cit.*, 45 ff.

<sup>8</sup> B. Nogara, "Di alcune vite e commenti medioevali di Ovidio," *Miscellanea Ceriana* (Milano, Hoepli, 1910) 424

<sup>9</sup> *Vat. lat.* 1479, f. 53. Pansa, *op. cit.*, 35

<sup>10</sup> Theodulf Carmina, XLV, *MGH*, PLAC, I, p. 543 (Dümmler, Berlin, Weidmann, 1881)

<sup>11</sup> *Cod. Laur.* xxxvi, 18

<sup>12</sup> *Vat. lat.* 1479. Cf. H. Sedlmayer, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ovidienstudien im Mittelalter," *Wiener Studien* VI (1884) 145

<sup>13</sup> A. Graf, *Roma nella memoria e nelle immaginazioni del Medio Evo* (Torino, Loescher, 1883), II, 297, note

<sup>14</sup> Nogara, *op. cit.*, 430

<sup>15</sup> W. Meyer, *Götting. Nachrichten* (1914), 1 ff.

<sup>16</sup> H. Delahaye, *Les Légendes Hagiographiques* (Bruxelles, Soc. Bollandistes, 1927), ch. ii

So when the final fires my bones consume,  
I'll live, and much of me survive the tomb.

Ovid, *Am.*, I, xv, 41-42

**Modern Problems in the Ancient World**, by Frank Burr Marsh. Austin, The University of Texas Press, 1943. \$1.00

This book, published posthumously, contains five essays by the late Professor Frank Burr Marsh on various phases of some of the problems common to ancient and modern society. Problems to which the author devotes particular attention are those of agricultural depression, unemployment, and the breakdown of constitutional government.

The Greeks, according to Professor Marsh, because of agricultural depression and unemployment, had to resort to a 'new deal' on two different occasions. The first 'new deal' consisted in the reforms of Solon. No economic reforms, however, could alleviate the situation in Athens for long, since any period of prosperity inevitably, because of the institution of slavery, would bring in its wake a new depression. As soon as conditions became good, those prosperous enough to do so began buying more slaves, with the result that there was again unemployment among the masses. It is not surprising, then, to find that a second 'new deal' was put into effect in the years following the conflict with Persia. This event marked the beginning of Athenian imperialism.

When the Delian League was organized, Athens was able to relieve unemployment by giving her able-bodied citizens work with the navy. Later on, as need for the navy decreased, and many of the members of the League asked to be allowed to withdraw their support, Athens realized that she could not yield without creating a serious new problem of unemployment at home. Not only would there be no work for thousands of Athenians who were employed by the navy, but there would also be far less need for the services of the Athenian courts, which employed many of the older, and otherwise unemployed, Athenians as jurors. These, too, would find themselves without any means of support. So Athens was forced by economic conditions to continue and expand her imperialistic policy. Incidentally, the author sees much that was good in this policy, and he believes that the opposition found in the states under Athenian control came from the oligarchic minorities rather than from the democratic majorities.

In discussing the breakdown of constitutional government in antiquity, Professor Marsh turns to the fall of the Roman Republic for his example. Since the Roman Republic was overthrown by military might, the causes for its fall must be sought in the Roman military system. The system of military conscription based on wealth, which was employed in the early days of the Republic, worked a great hardship on small farmers, and eventually almost destroyed this class, since many of the landowners had to spend so much of their time at war that they lost their land completely, as a result of being unable to care for it properly. With the disappearance of this class of citizens the traditional system of conscription became less and less effective. When Rome expanded beyond the borders of Italy and developed her system of provinces, the old method of recruiting troops proved totally inadequate. Marius, realizing the ineffectiveness of the earlier

system, introduced an entirely new plan. His plan was to recruit volunteers from among the unemployed farm laborers by tempting them with offers of booty and a bonus in the form of land at the end of the term of service. This provided a more efficient army, but it was an army that was loyal to its leader rather than to the state. Marius had so much success with his scheme that other military leaders, including Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar, employed it in succeeding generations. The leader who had recruited his army in this manner, however, could not retire to private life as soon as his campaigns were concluded, regardless of how eager he might be to do so; he had to take steps to secure for his soldiers the land that had been promised to them. Had the Senate been willing to cooperate, the situation might have been saved. But, as a matter of fact, time after time the Senate refused to do anything to reward veterans who had fought brilliant campaigns. It was this attitude which forced Pompey to take part in the First Triumvirate. Several years later Caesar was confronted with the same attitude. At the conclusion of his campaigns in Gaul he sought the consulship again, in order to be in a position to make arrangements for his soldiers, since he knew from the experiences of others that he could not depend on the Senate to take care of the matter. When the Senate objected to his plan, there was nothing for him to do but march on Rome. His soldiers, in the opinion of the author, would not have tolerated any other procedure.

A specially interesting chapter which could not be taken up in this review deals with the political machine with which the Roman Senate kept itself in power. The book is one of the most stimulating it has been this reviewer's pleasure to read in some time. While some historians may be inclined to disagree with some of the writer's conclusions, I am sure all will agree that his book is a valuable contribution to our literature on Greek and Roman history.

*Saint Louis University*

CHAUNCEY E. FINCH

*Why Not Learn Greek?*<sup>1</sup> is a concentrated effort "to start Greek by studying a short piece of pure Attic prose inductively through the irreducible minimum of forms, syntax, and vocabulary, without the distraction of pictures, notes, and derivations, and without the pernicious help of Greek sentences forged in Latin or English style." This sounds like a direct challenge to writers of textbooks of the older school. Well, there is only one way of proving the author wrong—by giving her pamphlet a fair trial in the classroom. It is her conviction that "if you are completely familiar with the three declensions, with the indicative, infinitive, and participles of the present and aorists in all voices, and have toiled devotedly over the indirect statements and genitives absolute of Lysias's *For Mantiheos*, then you have surmounted the INEVITABLE drudgery of a new accomplishment and can begin to enjoy Greek as literature." Any attempt at making Greek easy with due insistence on 'the inevitable drudgery' should be welcomed.

<sup>1</sup> *Why Not Learn Greek?* by Helen Pope, Ph. D.; Cosmos Greek-American Printing Company, Inc.; New York, 1941; pp. 96; 50 cents.



# The Classical Bulletin

Published monthly except July, August and September by  
St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

Subscription price: \$1.00 a year

Entered as second-class matter, at the post-office at St. Louis 3,  
Mo., under the Act of March 3, 1879

## EDITOR

James A. Kleist, S.J.

St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

## ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Francis A. Preuss, S.J. . . . . St. Stanislaus Sem'y, Florissant, Mo.  
A. A. Jacobsmeier, S.J. . . . . St. Stanislaus Sem'y, Florissant, Mo.  
Joseph A. Walsh, S.J. . . . . Milford Novitiate, Milford, Ohio  
F. A. Sullivan, S.J. . . . . St. Andrew-on-Hudson, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.  
Francis X. Entz, S.J. . . . . Spring Hill College, Mobile, Ala.  
James E. Malone, S.J. . . . . Alma College, Alma, Cal.  
Carol L. Bernhardt, S.J. . . . . Weston College, Weston, Mass.  
Jos. T. Clark, S.J. . . . . Woodstock College, Woodstock, Md.

## BUSINESS EDITOR

Eugene R. Crewse, S.J. . . . . St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

Vol. XX

MAY, 1944

No. 8

## Editorial

"*Mater Ecclesia*" is the title of a learned monograph by Dr. Joseph Plumpe, of the Catholic University of America, which collects and weighs the documentary evidence for the genesis and development of the concept of the Church as *Mater* in early Christianity down to 311.<sup>1</sup> Chapters I and II investigate the scriptural prototypes and contemporary analogies of that title, as well as its Christian adumbrations during the second century. Here the author takes occasion, *inter alia*, to remind the student of the classics of the Gnostic *Matres*, the pagan *Magnae Matres*, non-Christian analogies, and the Roman imperial *Matres* (Livia Drusilla, Annia Galeria Faustina, etc.). Separate chapters are devoted to the Confessors of Lyons and Vienne and St. Irenaeus, to Tertullian, to Clement of Alexandria and Origen, to St. Cyprian, and to St. Methodius of Philippi. The References and an Index, besides some excellent plates illustrating the monumental evidence, enhance the value of this work to the historian of the early Church.

The question of *where* and *when* the concept of *Mater Ecclesia* came into being is answered by the statement that "Greater Phrygia is the most likely place of origin," or, possibly, Syria. This brings us to the region where the pagan cult of the *Magnae Matres* was well known. The author admits the possibility of pagan influence in forming the concept, and since this is of interest to students of the classics, we are happy to quote a significant paragraph well calculated to counterbalance all inclination to jump at syncretistic conclusions on the basis of 'parallels':

*Doctrinally* there certainly can be no reason against assuming that the concept and veneration of the Church as a mother may have been inspired even in goodly part by the cult of the mother goddesses wherever Christianity took root, or that the Aeon mothers may have lent some contribution to the same. *Why should not these figments of an errant religious world have fitted into the schemes of Divine Providence? . . . After all, no genuine parallelism existed: the Church was no goddess herself. (Italics ours)*

This monograph is a worthy contribution to Professor Johannes Quasten's *Studies in Christian Antiquity*, of which it is No. 5.<sup>2</sup> The *Studies*, it should be noted, is conducted on the very sensible and expressly declared principle that early Christian practices cannot be intelligently discussed without thorough acquaintance with ancient classical culture. Here, then, is a field to lure the classical scholar. The collision between Christianity and paganism was bound to elicit interesting reactions.

<sup>1</sup> "*Mater Ecclesia*," An Inquiry into the Concept of the Church as Mother in early Christianity. No. 5, *Studies in Christian Antiquity*. Edited by Johannes Quasten. The Catholic University of America; Washington 17, D. C. 1943. \$2.00.

<sup>2</sup> The preceding numbers of the series are: Death and Burial in Christian Antiquity; The Eucharistic Doctrine and Liturgy of the Mystagogical Catecheses of Theodore of Mopsuestia; Angels and Demons according to Lactantius; The Problem of Divine Anger in Arnobius and Lactantius.

I accepted the college curriculum as it was, without wasting any time over whether it might be better or worse. It was my business to saw wood so long as there was any wood to saw, whether soft or hard. Now, after the lapse of years I can take a saner view of a classical education than when I was in the midst of acquiring it. I have no regrets for the five or six years I spent on Latin and Greek in school and college. I do not feel that the long time was wasted. Destined as I was to become a professor of English (hear, hear) and to follow to some extent a literary career, I am glad I could cast my anchor in the two great ancient literatures which have made a large contribution to the moral and intellectual ideals on which our modern civilizations have been built. What would be now, I ask myself, my outlook on life and literature had I no direct knowledge of Homer and Vergil, Demosthenes and Cicero, Plato and Aristotle, Thucydides and Tacitus, and above all, no knowledge of the Greek dramatists? I wonder just how I should have got on without this knowledge.—Wilbur Cross, in "A Connecticut Yankee," *College English*, February, 1944, p. 280.

## Things New and Old

BY CHARLES CHRISTOPHER MIEROW

Carleton College

However presumptuous it may appear to add to the great mass of literature dealing with the life and letters of St. Jerome, at least a pretext (if not a text) for this brief paper may be adduced from his own writings: "In veteri via novam semitam quaerimus . . . ut nec eadem sint et eadem sint."<sup>1</sup>

In reading the epistles of this great father of the church, one is impressed both by the force and by the originality of the language employed. To be sure there are many reminiscences of his great classical models of style. Who that has read the orations against Catiline can fail to recall the prototype for Jerome's vivid, nervous, dynamic sentence: "Elegit, arripuit, tenuit, coepit, inplevit"?<sup>2</sup> Indeed we might well say of him, using his own language: "Nihil . . . Latinus tuis haberemus voluminibus";<sup>3</sup> and again: "Et facile loqueris et pure."<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless there is a freshness and virility in the colloquial phrases of St. Jerome's letters which makes him appear more modern than most of the writers of his time. He uses many memorable expressions like: "the will to learn";<sup>5</sup> "the slippery path of youth";<sup>6</sup> "nags yield to chargers";<sup>7</sup> and that charmingly effective mixed metaphor "soothing the ears with flowers."<sup>8</sup>

His vividness of style is secured by such figurative expressions as: "Let our letters run between us, let them meet each other, let them speak with us";<sup>9</sup> "It's much better to have a stomach-ache than a brain-storm";<sup>10</sup> "a map of Nepotian's virtues";<sup>11</sup> "don't burst into print";<sup>12</sup> "heri in amphitheatro, hodie in ecclesia; vespere in circo, mane in altari";<sup>13</sup> "postquam navigare coepisti et ad intimum cerebrum tuum sentinae putredo pervenit";<sup>14</sup> "tranquillitas ista tempestas est."<sup>15</sup>

The many proverbial utterances incorporated by Jerome in his epistles are reminiscent of Benjamin Franklin's sayings of Poor Richard. Here are some of the more striking examples:

Rara est in hominibus fides.<sup>16</sup>  
Caritas non potest comparari.<sup>17</sup>  
Dilectio pretium non habet.<sup>17</sup>  
Amicitia quae desinere potest vera numquam fuit.<sup>17</sup>  
Fiunt, non nascuntur, Christiani.<sup>18</sup>  
Plenus venter facile de ieiuniis disputat.<sup>19</sup>  
Non Hierosolymis fuisse, sed Hierosolymis bene vixisse laudandum est.<sup>19</sup>  
Monachum perfectum in patria sua esse non posse.<sup>20</sup>  
Plus est animum deposuisse quam cultum.<sup>21</sup>  
Coepisse multorum est, ad calcem pervenisse paucorum.<sup>22</sup>  
Non imitemur eius vitia, cuius virtutes non possumus sequi.<sup>23</sup>  
Difficile factu est gloriam virtute superare et ab his diligi quos praecedas.<sup>24</sup>

Many interesting phrases occur throughout the voluminous pages of his correspondence. There is a quaint reference to the great variety of insects "whose shapes we know better than their names."<sup>25</sup> The camel is aptly described as "the most twisted of animals."<sup>26</sup> Jerome evidently prefers a smile to a guffaw, for he remarks of his young friend Nepotian: "Gaudium risu non cachinno intellegeres."<sup>27</sup> We find an interesting admixture of the classics and Christianity (the *utile* with the *dulci* perhaps) when he says: "Credite experto, quasi Christianus Christianis loquor."<sup>28</sup> Like Alexander, he advocates cutting the Gordian knot: "Festina (he says to Paulinus), naviculae funem magis praecide quam solve."<sup>29</sup>

We feel a warm glow of affection for the kindly teacher who says "quotienscumque mea opuscula videris, totiens amici dulcissimi recordatus," and again, "Quaeso ut quos caritas iungit terrarum longitudo non separet," "Let not distance put them asunder."<sup>30</sup> In a notable sentence he speaks of the heavenly grace of Jesus: "Nisi enim habuisset et in vultu quiddam oculisque sidereum, numquam eum statim secuti fuissent apostoli,"<sup>31</sup> "Beauty like that of the stars."

Again, how appallingly appropriate to the present day is his declaration: "Iam tibi ostenderem totius mundi ruinas, gentes gentibus et regnis regna conlisa; alios torqueri, alios necari, alios obrui fluctibus, alios ad servitutem trahi."<sup>32</sup> Here again, doubtless, his model for the entire letter, a lament for Nepotian, is to be found in the well-known letter of consolation sent to Cicero by his friend Servius at the time of Tullia's

death. The epistle as a whole is marked by dignity and beauty of thought and of language.

St. Jerome endears himself the more to his readers by the many human touches that enliven his writings. He naively declares that he leaves certain things unexplained because he likes to be asked!<sup>33</sup> Perhaps here there is a conscious and deliberate imitation of the Younger Pliny's first letter to Tacitus about the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius: "Interim Miseni ego et mater."

The scholar's joy of discovery is beautifully expressed when Jerome says: "He that hath the key of David opened for me the door, and led me into his chamber, and put me in a clift of the rock."<sup>34</sup> And he continues with a quotation from The Song of Solomon: "Inveni quem quaesivit anima mea: tenebo eum et non dimittam eum."<sup>35</sup>

Many of the letters are biographical in nature and make his friends live again in our sight. To defend himself from the charge of eulogizing unduly those whose lives he is recording and immortalizing, Jerome says: "Sed quasi Christianum de Christiana quae sunt vera proferre, id est historiam scribere, non panegyricum."<sup>36</sup> Isn't that a good specification for biography? Of his friend Asella he writes: "Sola vitae suae qualitate promeruit."<sup>37</sup> "Quality of life." His loyalty to absent friends and his remembrance of them is indicated in his words: "Cum quo loqui non possumus, de eo numquam loqui desinamus."<sup>38</sup>

To a friend who owes him a letter Jerome says: "Si amas, rescribe; si irasceris, iratus licet scribe."<sup>39</sup> And to one who writes short letters: "Cur finem iungis exordio?"<sup>40</sup> This was during his lonely years as a hermit, a "solitary," in the desert. To Heliodorus, who forsook this manner of life and returned to the world, Jerome wrote: "Quid facis in turba, qui solus es?"<sup>41</sup> It seemed a contradiction in terms: "solus in turba!" Once when writing-paper was scarce, ingenuity proved victorious: "Ingenio est victa pauperies. Minutae quidem litterae, sed confabulatio longa est!"<sup>42</sup> The letter that follows is amazingly liberal in its sentiments, a plea for a charitable attitude toward sinners: "Tu enim quis es qui alienum servum iudices?" Again he declares: "Errasse humanum est et confiteri errorem prudentis."<sup>43</sup> The sentiment is surprisingly like that of Poor Richard on the subject of honesty.

Like all great men, Jerome was a keen observer, and he possessed also the power of calling up clear-cut mental images before the mind's eye of the reader. Consider his pen portrait of the blind man: "ille caecus extendens manum et saepe ubi nemo est."<sup>44</sup> And have we not all seen this calligraphy: "tremula manus per curvos cerae tramites errantem stilum ducit."<sup>45</sup> The materials used for writing today are different, to be sure. The result is much the same.

Jerome described himself as "diversorii Bethlemitici et praesepe dominici amator,"<sup>46</sup> and proved his devotion by living in Bethlehem, in the cell that was his Paradise, for the last thirty-four years of his life. He puts it into simple, figurative language when writing to his friend Fabiola: "Nos in Efrata (that is, Bethlehem Ephratah) vagientem de praesepe audivimus infanitem ac querimonias ac voculam ad tuas aures cupimus pervenire."<sup>47</sup>

After reading Jerome's extant letters, we feel strangely drawn to this Saint of God. We become acquainted with him as with a friend of our own generation. We love him for his simplicity and sincerity and humanity. Yet with our response to these human traits is mingled a reverence that might well be expressed in the words he himself used to describe another: "In te omnium oculi diriguntur, conversatio (tua) magistra est publicae disciplinae."<sup>48</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae* (recensuit Isidorus Hilberg, Vindobonae, 1918) CXXIII, 1. <sup>2</sup> XXIV, 2. <sup>3</sup> LVIII, 9, 2. <sup>4</sup> LVIII, 11, 1. This tribute to Paulinus is found in the letter which contains (chap. 10) Jerome's concise but cogent criticism of the literary style of Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, Arnobius, and Hilary. <sup>5</sup> *Eruditionis voluntas*, LXX, 5, 2. <sup>6</sup> *Lubricum adolescentiae iter*, VII, 4, 1. <sup>7</sup> *Caballos equis cedere*, LX, 17 (last sentence). <sup>8</sup> *Nec aures Quintiliani flosculis . . . mulcendae*, XXXVI, 14, 1. <sup>9</sup> V, 1. <sup>10</sup> *Multoque melius est stomachum te dolere quam mentem*, LXXIX, 10, 1. <sup>11</sup> LX, 7, 3 (last sentence). <sup>12</sup> *Ne ad scribendum cito prosilias et levi ducaris insania*, CXXV, 18, 1. <sup>13</sup> LXIX, 9, 4 (p. 698). <sup>14</sup> LXI, 3, 3. <sup>15</sup> XIV, 6, 3. <sup>16</sup> LVIII, 6, 2. <sup>17</sup> III, 6 (end). <sup>18</sup> CVII, 1, 4. <sup>19</sup> LVIII, 2, 2. <sup>20</sup> XIV, 7, 2. <sup>21</sup> LXXVII, 2, 1. <sup>22</sup> LXXI, 2, 1. <sup>23</sup> LXXXIV, 9, 1. <sup>24</sup> LXXXIX, 5, 3. For additional proverbs see (e.g.), XLVIII (XLIX) 4, 1; LII, 8, 2; LXI, 3, 1; LXVI, 8, 1; CVII, 4, 5; and XXXIII, 3. <sup>25</sup> LX, 12, 1. <sup>26</sup> *Fortuosissimi*, CVII, 3 (end). <sup>27</sup> LX, 10, 6 (end). <sup>28</sup> LXXXIV, 3, 5. <sup>29</sup> LIII, 11, 2. <sup>30</sup> LXXI, 7, 2. <sup>31</sup> LXV, 8, 3. <sup>32</sup> LX, 18, 2. <sup>33</sup> XXVI, 5. <sup>34</sup> XXXVI, 11, 1. <sup>35</sup> *Cant.*, 3, 4. <sup>36</sup> CVIII, 21, 5. <sup>37</sup> XXIV, 5, 2. <sup>38</sup> LX, 19 (end). <sup>39</sup> VIII, 3. <sup>40</sup> IX, 4. <sup>41</sup> XIV, 6, 2. <sup>42</sup> XI, 1, 1. <sup>43</sup> LVII, 12, 3. <sup>44</sup> LXVI, 5, 1. <sup>45</sup> X, 2, 2. <sup>46</sup> LXXVII, 2, 3. <sup>47</sup> LXIV, 8, 2. <sup>48</sup> LX, 14, 5.

### Cicero in a New Context

BY CHARLES S. RAYMENT  
The University of Michigan

There can be no quarrel with the division of Roman political history into a republican and an imperial epoch; but to make the rise of the principate a literary *limes*, as is commonly done, may impair the faculty of recognizing continuity in a development which transcends that bound. Thus, when Petronius, Quintilian, and Tacitus inquire into the corruption of contemporary eloquence, their strictures are treated as if they were completely new. Yet if the gap between the republic and the empire is bridged, Cicero's *De Oratore* will supply the most striking correspondences, especially in regard to the defects of the rhetorical training.<sup>1</sup>

An imposing array of evidence could be assembled, but I propose to cite only those passages in which the identity of views is clear-cut. In general terms, Messala asserts the need for broadly cultural education, and declares that its benefits are apparent even when it has no utilitarian application: "And let nobody reply that it is enough for us to be taught one simple and unvarying skill suited to the situation; . . . knowledge embracing many disciplines is itself an ornament to us even when we are engaged in quite different fields."<sup>2</sup> But so also Crassus says: "This is my opinion, that nobody should be ranked among the orators who has not a thorough training in all those disciplines which befit a free man; even if we do not make use of them in speaking, still it is evident and manifest whether we are unfamiliar or conversant with them." And again: "Nor can a public speaker be truly cultured and gifted without variety of learning."<sup>3</sup>

More specifically, the elements of this culture are

stated by Messala as follows: "Not enough attention is devoted either to acquiring familiarity with sources or to scanning the annals of the past."<sup>4</sup> Petronius puts on the lips of the grammarian Agamemnon the demand "that young men zealous of scholarship be subjected to the purifying influence of a strict reading program, that they might make their spirits obedient to the tenets of philosophy."<sup>5</sup> But before them Cicero represents Crassus as asserting: "Poets, too, should be read, historians conned, practitioners and expounders of all liberal arts read and reread."<sup>6</sup>

In details the parallelism is no less evident. For example, it is insisted that practice themes must resemble cases at law. Thus Quintilian urges: "Let imaginary cases be as realistic as possible; and the declamation, too, insofar as that is feasible, imitative of the real pleas for which it is designed to train."<sup>7</sup> He goes on to censure themes dealing with "wonder-workers, and plagues, and oracles, and stepmothers more cruel than their tragic counterparts,"<sup>8</sup> just as Petronius ridicules "the pirates standing with chains on the shore, the tyrants writing decrees which bid sons cut off their fathers' heads," and "the oracles calling for sacrifice of three or four maidens to end a plague,"<sup>9</sup> and Tacitus scoffs at "rewards bestowed on tyrant-slayers or the choices of ravished virgins or remedies against a plague or mothers' sins of incest."<sup>10</sup> (The expression *vitiatarum electiones* refers to an imaginary law of the rhetorical schools that a victim of rape might demand her ravisher's death or compel him to make amends by marrying her.) Crassus, in the *De Oratore*, tacitly rebukes unrealistic themes by praising those of a natural character: "I heartily approve your wonted practice of taking some case like those brought before the ordinary courts and of delivering a plea as realistic as possible."<sup>11</sup>

Mere facile utterance is treated as an unworthy aim. Quintilian alludes to it thus: "A certain perverse ostentation leads declaimers to want to burst into speech as soon as the ground of dispute is stated."<sup>12</sup> But he was anticipated by Crassus: "Therefore, even in those practice exercises, though it is useful often to speak on the spur of the moment, it is all the same more useful to take time to reflect and then to speak with ampler preparation and greater care."<sup>13</sup>

The superiority of written to oral exercises is maintained. Petronius' spokesman Agamemnon advises *ut verba atroci stilo effoderent*, "to trace their words in the wax with the recalcitrant stylus."<sup>14</sup> Similarly Quintilian urges: "Then let the student, unaided, compose with the stylus pleas which he has heard delivered, or even treat original arguments, provided that they have the ring of truth."<sup>15</sup> But Crassus had already insisted on the advantages of that discipline: "The point of prime importance is . . . to write as much as possible (*caput est quam plurimum scribere*). The stylus is the best and most eminent instructor and teacher of speech (*Stylus optimus et praestantissimus dicendi effector ac magister*)."<sup>16</sup> Even Antonius seconds the argument, urging that the prospective orator select a model and "strive to achieve the same results not only by repeated and strenuous (oral) practice but also by writing."<sup>17</sup>

Again, Quintilian touches upon the absence of orderly



arrangement in contemporary speeches: "Roughness is deemed more powerful than polish, and disorder more poetic than order."<sup>18</sup> And later he strikes out at the unseemly diction of orators, which resembles singing rather than speech: "But upon what fault among these should I lay greater stress than the singing delivery, a vice now most current in all pleas, forensic and scholastic alike?"<sup>19</sup> So, too, Juvenal speaks of the class declaiming on tyrannicide: "For whatever it had just read sitting, the same will it standing repeat, and the same will it sing in verses the same."<sup>20</sup> These are faults which, Crassus believes, will be counteracted by practice in writing: "Even the arrangement and adaptation of words is achieved by writing in a measure and cadence not poetic but, as it were, oratorical."<sup>21</sup>

A cardinal precept is to model oneself discriminatingly after some orator of repute. Agamemnon admonishes *ut quod vellent imitari diu audirent*,<sup>22</sup> and Quintilian urges that after some training in theory and moderate practice "the student choose, as our ancestors were wont to do, some speaker to emulate and model himself after."<sup>23</sup> Here Antonius is Cicero's spokesman for the same demand: "Let this, then, take first place in my advice: that we show him whom to imitate. Then let practice follow whereby through imitation he may mold himself to the pattern and likeness of the speaker of his choice."<sup>24</sup>

Oratorical training must provide knowledge of life and mankind. Tacitus reproaches the schools with failing in this duty: "Nor is attention enough devoted to acquiring familiarity with events or men or epochs."<sup>25</sup> But Cicero had proclaimed the necessity a century earlier, for Antonius attempts to combat Crassus' declaration that "no one can by oratory either stir his hearers' minds, or, having stirred them, lull them again to calm, . . . save if he have explored the innermost mysteries of nature, the habits and the calculations (*rationes*) of men."<sup>26</sup> And undaunted by the rebuttal, Crassus again insists: "The true orator must examine, hear, read, argue, handle, and thrash out everything that belongs to the life of man, since that is the province under his control (*ea est ei subiecta materies*), and in it the orator's activity is centred."<sup>27</sup>

The contrast between study in the schools and pleading in the forum is a commonplace of the critics, especially when they liken the one to gladiatorial practice and the other to combat in the arena. More striking is the figure from Quintilian and its counterpart from the *De Oratore*, which suggest Plato as a common source. Quintilian writes: "Young men ought not to be forced to abide too long midst a false reflection of reality and empty images—so long that it becomes hard to accustom them, leaving these, not to fear real risks, which assume the aspect of the sun, as it were, after that familiar shade in which they have grown nearly to old age."<sup>28</sup> An anticipation of this thought is obvious in Crassus' phrasing: "Then expression (*dictio*) must be led out from this practice which was carried on in the home and in the shade, into the thick of the ranks, the dust, the shouting, the camp, and the forensic battle-array . . . and that sheltered study must be brought forward into the light of reality."<sup>29</sup>

That the training offered by the schools was super-

ficial and avoided difficulties is the crux of a criticism by Montanus Vitienus, quoted by the elder Seneca: "Gladiators practice with weapons heavier than they use in combat; they remain longer under arms at the command of the trainer than they face their adversaries. Wrestlers strive with two or three together, the better to resist one. Runners, though their speed is tested within narrow confines, in training run many times the distance they are to run once in a race. In the case of school declamations, just the opposite holds; everything is softer and easier."<sup>30</sup> Much more succinctly and acidly Petronius represents Agamemnon as concluding: "Now while they are boys they waste their time in the schools; when they are grown to youth they are mocked in the forum."<sup>31</sup> But Antonius, alleging that students were not required to give careful attention to cases, had made the charge even more specific by a citation: "This advice is not given in the schools, for easy cases are assigned to boys. 'The Law forbids a foreigner to scale the wall; one does so and routs the enemy; he is brought to trial.' There is no problem in familiarizing oneself with such a case; the schools are right, therefore, in giving no advice about the mastering of one's cases."<sup>32</sup>

Recognition of the concurrence of these criticisms does not, however, force the conclusion that the state of oratory or the procedure of the rhetorical schools were the same under the empire as during the late republic. So to conclude would be as wrong as to consider the observations of Petronius, Quintilian, and Tacitus entirely unexampled.

It must be borne in mind that Crassus reveals himself a perfectionist, and to a critic of such temper pessimism is congenital. It may safely be assumed that he often condemns as general, or even universal, faults of which relatively few were guilty in his own day, but which had spread and taken root thereafter. We know, for instance, from Suetonius that the character of themes for declamation had suffered marked degeneration.<sup>33</sup> And every age has abundantly criticized its schools, even those of the technical and vocational type, for failing to prepare their students for life.

Then again, it is plausible that the later critics did not feel free to emphasize the constraint which the imperial system put upon oratory. Maternus, in Tacitus's *Dialogus*, hints at the state of affairs when he alludes to the connection between political turmoil and great oratory,<sup>34</sup> and to the added incentive to speakers which a large audience provides.<sup>35</sup> Though such views do not bulk large in their writings in comparison with the attacks on method, they may well have figured more importantly in unpublished appraisals. One need turn only to Pliny, or, better yet, to the later panegyrists, to see how completely servility had debased respectable talent.

Besides, what could have been more natural than for conservatives like Quintilian and Tacitus, to whom Ciceronian oratory represented the flower of perfection, to disregard altered circumstances and assume that one need only return to the earlier regimen if he would revive a decadent art? Just as a doctor's faulty diagnosis may result in a wrong prescription, so their traditionalism may have led them to espouse an unworkable program of reform.

In any case, we must admire Cicero's vision in anticipating by a century the opinions which had then become widespread among intelligent critics. And for our own times we may derive profit from the conclusions to which we are irresistibly drawn by this study, that no art can flourish which neglects the liberal tradition and narrows its emphasis to technique, nor which is throttled in its free development by tyranny.

<sup>1</sup> Modern writers on the subject show a complete disregard of Cicero's statements, nor do editors of the ancient authors, usually so keen on the scent of parallels, point the affinity of the criticisms to Cicero's. Cp. Victor Cucheval, *Histoire de l'Eloquence Romaine depuis la Mort de Cicéron jusqu'à l'Avènement de l'Empereur Hadrien*, II; Paris, 1893; 230. Thomas Stanley Simonds, *The Themes Treated by the Elder Seneca*; Baltimore, 1896. P. Bornecque, *Les Déclamations et les Déclamateurs d'après Sénèque le père*; Lille, 1902; Lille Université Travaux et Mémoires, I, *Droit, Lettres*; Nouvelle Série 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus *Dial.* 32. <sup>3</sup> Cicero *De Oratore* I. 16. 72; III. 21. 80  
<sup>4</sup> *Dial.* 30. <sup>5</sup> *Satyricon* 4. <sup>6</sup> *De Or.* I. 34. 158.  
<sup>7</sup> *Inst. Or.* II. 10. 4. <sup>8</sup> *Ib.* II. 10. 5. <sup>9</sup> *Satyr.* I. <sup>10</sup> *Dial.* 35.  
<sup>11</sup> I. 33. 149. <sup>12</sup> X. 7. 21. <sup>13</sup> *De Or.* I. 33. 150.  
<sup>14</sup> *Sat.* 4. <sup>15</sup> X. 5. 20. <sup>16</sup> *De Or.* I. 33. 150. <sup>17</sup> *Ib.* II. 23. 96.  
<sup>18</sup> II. 12. 3. <sup>19</sup> XI. 3. 57. <sup>20</sup> *Sat.* VII. 152-3.  
<sup>21</sup> *De Or.* I. 33. 152. <sup>22</sup> *Satyr.* 4. <sup>23</sup> X. 5. 19.  
<sup>24</sup> *De Or.* II. 22. 90. <sup>25</sup> *Dial.* 30. <sup>26</sup> *De Or.* I. 51. 219.  
<sup>27</sup> *Ib.* III. 14. 54. <sup>28</sup> X. 5. 17. <sup>29</sup> *De Or.* I. 34. 157.  
<sup>30</sup> *Contr.* IX. Praef. 4-5. <sup>31</sup> *Satyr.* 4. <sup>32</sup> *De Or.* II. 24. 100.  
<sup>33</sup> *De Claris Rhet.* 1. <sup>34</sup> 36-37. <sup>35</sup> *Ib.* 39.

### Subscribe to Classical Journals!

BY A. M. WITHERS

Concord College, Athens, West Virginia

A professor of the classics has told me that he does not enlarge publicly upon the subject of classics values because the frequency of such efforts in the past gives renewals of them a flavor of plagiarism. A classics editor may also feel inhibitions in regard to urging the rewards of subscription to classics periodicals. But the writer, who is neither a classics teacher nor a classics editor, but an instructor in another field largely dependent on the classics, feels no 'backwardness in coming forward' to labor teachers of Latin and Greek who do not subscribe at least to the *Journal*, the *Weekly*, the *Outlook*, and the *BULLETIN*. I know that these do not exhaust the list of the classics magazines, which includes the *American Journal of Philology*, *Classical Philology*, and the *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, (and possibly others), and that these, too, have their powerful claims upon classics teachers; but I will not weaken my philippic by too drastic a 'reach.' The simple disturbing fact is the remarkably feeble support great numbers of the teachers of the classics are giving to their own profoundly necessary publications, though it is difficult to understand why they should ever hesitate to apply the price of a single shoe or one tankful of gasoline to the purchase of a full year's supply of four (!) indispensable vehicles of intellectual and spiritual stimulation in the service of the classics.

I should like to say to the classics teachers who do not yet know it that teachers of Latin in the high schools are being singled out in some quarters as an instructional element doing an inferior job. Three professors in law schools have written me giving expression to this charge, and a prominent (and highly respected among classicists) professor of Education has made similar

intimations. For myself I have steadily refused to believe that the Latin teachers are inferior to others, in preparation, method, or sense of duty. But I have to whistle to keep up my courage in doing my bit to defend Latin teachers in a difficult situation when I hear that the classics publications are kept back from maximum usefulness by narrowness of spontaneous demand for the uniquely essential things they have to offer.

I do not wish to imply that classics instructors in high schools are the only guilty members in this regard among the teaching profession, or even that they are the most guilty, for observation seems to show me that the majority of instructors in college and university are likewise sinning. In preference to owning files of their own periodicals and reading them diligently and leisurely in the quiet of their homes and offices, they are satisfied with cursory browsings in the single copies of the institutions' libraries, keeping in their unpatriotic pockets the modicum of money imperatively needed in editorial rooms. The attitude thus demonstrated is as unprofessional as it is hurtful to the promotion of general interests. I would go so far as to call it unethical. The idea, in a nutshell, appears to be to 'let George' support our magazine sources of professional light and energy.

That allegiance in practical and material form to the professional classics publications is absolutely a primary requisite should, I think, be clear to everybody. Here is no place for the "de gustibus" plea. The present message conveys no original thoughts, nor even unrecorded information, but perhaps it may have a modest share in the awakening of some dilatory senses of responsibility and fealty among the teachers of Latin and Greek in high schools, colleges, and universities.

Volume II of Werner Jaeger's *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture* now lies before us. *Paideia* "is a difficult thing to define. Its full content and meaning become clear to us only when we read its history and follow its attempts to realize itself. By using a Greek word for a Greek thing, I intend to imply that it is seen with the eyes, not of modern men, but of the Greeks. It is impossible to avoid bringing in modern expressions like *civilization*, *culture*, *tradition*, *literature*, or *education*. But none of them really covers what the Greeks meant by *paideia*." Volume II contains Book Three of the whole series, and is entitled "In Search of the Divine Centre." It is exclusively devoted to Plato, under the following headings: The Fourth Century; The Memory of Socrates; Plato and Posterity; Plato's Smaller Socratic Dialogues; *Protagoras*; *Gorgias*; *Meno*; *The Symposium*. The following 165 pages are devoted to a discussion of *The Republic* and its numerous problems. Extended Notes on various topics conclude this stately volume. (Oxford University Press: New York. Price \$3.75.)

### Three Pedagogical Maxims

Three well-known maxims may help and comfort the classical teacher in adjusting the curriculum to the needs of his individual class: *Non omnia possumus omnes*; *In medio tutissimus ibis*; *Ne quid nimis*.



